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THE  
CAUSES AND CURE OF  
ARMAMENTS AND WAR

BY

ALBERT W. WALDERSON

INCLUDES ALSO

A Refutation of Mr. Norman Angell's  
Thesis as set forth in "The Great Illusion."

Wars that Pay and Wars that do not.

The True Colonising Principle.

The Myth of Racialism.

Etc., Etc.

LONDON

P. S. KING & SON

ORCHARD HOUSE, WESTMINSTER



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# THE CAUSES AND CURE OF ARMAMENTS AND WAR

BY

A. W. ALDERSON

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One of the objects of this pamphlet is to propound and prove that all wars and armaments, without a single exception of any kind, from the dawn of history until the present moment, have been due to three causes, that the same three causes will have exactly the same inevitable effect in the future as in the past, that one of the three causes is being gradually and automatically eliminated by force of circumstances, and that another of the causes can be removed (it is largely the aim of this pamphlet to remove it).

Another object, among several others, is to set forth and prove the contention that the hitherto prevailing view of colonies, conquest, flag, rule and empire is erroneous.

Incidentally the contentions of Mr. Norman Angell in his book, "The Great Illusion," published in November, 1909, are refuted, it being also pointed out that, with one all-important difference, his main conclusion was anticipated by the present writer.

The present competition in armaments is too well-known for it to be necessary for me to dilate on it; I will, however, mention that latest developments include British naval estimates of £51,000,000 (a record); the reversion to three years' army service by France; a special armaments levy by Germany of about £50,000,000, and a vast increase of the Russian peace footing. No wonder that many thinkers, of all shades of opinion, have sought to discover some means of stopping the drain.

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**Mr. Angell's Thesis stated.**—Let us take Mr. Norman Angell first, because in refuting his conclusions I partly state my own. His theory, to use his own words, is briefly as follows :—

“ *The Great Illusion* ” :

*Page 45.*—“ We are concerned with the case of fully civilised rival nations in fully occupied territory, and the fact of conquering such territory gives to the conqueror no material advantage which he could not have had without conquest.”

*Page 46.*—“ We might conquer Germany to-morrow, and we should find that we could not, because of that fact, make a single Englishman a shilling's worth the richer in consequence, the war indemnity notwithstanding.”

Mr. Angell says his theory applies to all civilised nations, such as those, for instance, of Western Europe. I submit, however, that by so saying Mr. Angell ruins and renders untrue the whole of his idea. I maintain that his conclusions are not true in the least of Western Europe and similar lands; I also maintain, however, that they *are* true of all nations which speak the same language, *and only of those*. (This contention I advanced in September, 1908, fourteen months before the publication of Mr. Angell's first booklet on this subject, “ *Europe's Optical Illusion*.”) His theory is *not* true of Europe because Europe speaks several tongues.

These are the exact words I published in September, 1908 :—

“ In wars between two peoples speaking the same tongue, neither side, winner or loser, though they fight till the crack of doom, can either “lose” or “gain” anything. (As a matter of fact they both lose in a way, because they are wasting blood and money all the time, and also, unconsciously, helping their rivals.)

This, then, is the immutable law : A community should in its own interest never do anything to damage any community speaking the same tongue as itself, but, on the contrary, should endeavour to do all in its power to advance the interests of such a community.

War between two communities speaking the same tongue is just like a man's right arm fighting his left—whichever arm wins the man suffers.”

On November 25th, 1908, I wrote :—

“Formerly countries, and even districts, were far more isolated, self-contained and self-supporting than they are now, consequently wars did not have the immediate, disorganising and ruinous effects they have at present, when the slightest shock sends a shiver through the social and commercial fabric, so delicately is everything interwoven.”

Mr. Angell asserts that it is impossible to profit by war. The above extracts show that as regards wars waged between folk speaking the same tongue, *and those only*, I agree with him. But I beg leave to contend, in flat contradiction to Mr. Angell's theory, that it is perfectly possible to profit exceedingly by wars waged between peoples speaking different tongues. And further on in this pamphlet I show how.

**Wars that cannot Pay.**—Mr. Angell gives his reasons for asserting that war is unprofitable, and those reasons were also stated by me in 1908 (see above extracts) in order to prove my assertion that war between same-speakers cannot pay. But in addition to these reasons there is another one which I also stated in 1908. It applies only to same-speaking countries. Mr. Angell of course does not mention it because his theory refers to *all* civilised countries, whether same-speaking or not. It is as follows: I suggest that countries which speak the same tongue are common to each other. Thus any land that speaks English is common not only to its own inhabitants but also to Americans and Englishmen and in fact to all English-speakers, no matter whence they come. In the same way, the works of Shakespeare, although he was never out of England, are not a monopoly to be enjoyed by Englishmen alone, they are the common property of all English-speakers: Americans, Australians, &c., &c. The ideas at present prevailing on this point are quite fallacious. An Englishman will talk of England as *his* country whereas it is not *his* country at all, it belongs just as much to Americans, and other English-speakers, in fact it belongs far more to an educated American than to an uneducated Englishman, as the former can earn a far better living and occupy a much better position in England than the latter. And the same thing applies to an English-

man in America. And so on. And if you (Americans or English) say : We can keep Englishmen (or Americans as the case may be) out of *our* country by immigration laws, then I reply : You are foolish ; you are cutting off your nose to spite your face. You should welcome good immigrants ; they are an asset.

The present erroneous way of looking at this matter should be abandoned, and the following substituted : Countries should be considered as belonging not to their inhabitants but to the language which is spoken in them. Thus England does not belong to Englishmen, the United States to Americans, Australia to Australians, but all three belong to the English language. The English language is the master, and England, the United States and Australia three servants of that master. All the servants should co-operate to advance their master's interests, because by so doing they are advancing their own. Every extension of the English language benefits in equal degree all English-speakers, quite irrespective of flag or nationality.

Therefore it is utter folly for a country to fight another one speaking the same tongue. After the war the "winner" can annex the "loser" it is true, but what good does that do ? Before the war the two countries already belonged to each other, the citizens of each could rove with exactly equal opportunities over both of them. The war hasn't increased the field of opportunity for either nation by a single square inch. When I read about one country annexing another (or part of another) country speaking the same tongue, it always reminds me of the man who, to lengthen a blanket which was too short to cover his feet, cut a piece off the top and sewed it on to the bottom. By so doing he did not increse the size of his blanket in the slightest, and he had all his trouble for nothing. Exactly the same thing, *mutatis mutandis*, applies to annexations between same-speaking nations. They *think* they are profiting by the operation, but so did the man with the blanket.

### **One of the three Causes of Armaments and War.**

(This cause applies only to wars between same-speaking countries). From the foregoing you will have been able



to deduce one of the three causes previously mentioned; it is as follows: The totally mistaken idea that it is possible to gain by a war between same-speakers. This idea can be dispelled, and it is one of the aims of this pamphlet to dispel it. When it is dispelled, however, there will still remain two other war-causes, and I therefore now turn to them

**Another Cause.**—(This cause also applies only to wars between same-speaking countries). During the lifetime of many people now living an immense change has come over a large part of the world. It has become what I will call “commercialised.” This change is due to steam, electricity, and inventions and discoveries generally. Compare the present day (I am writing these lines on May 22nd, 1914) with, say, 1874, 1864, 1854, and 1844. The advance in the last fifty years has been enormous. In 1844 there were scarcely any railways on the European Continent. (The first was built in 1838). Not till 1869 was there a trans-continental railway in the United States. In 1854 all battleships were still built of wood. The second-largest river in the world (the Congo) remained totally unknown until Stanley traced its course in 1877.

All these changes have had great effects, of which one is that the dynastic or personal war in many countries is a thing of the past. Formerly the rulers (sometimes a despot, often an oligarchy) of a country could make or end a war when they pleased, irrespective of loss or gain to the people they ruled. A war lasting several years would be fought to put a particular prince on a throne. Louis XIV.'s *L'état, c'est moi* was not an empty boast. Previous to “commercialisation” those who paid the piper did not call the tune. Hence we come to the second cause, which existed all over the world until commercialisation set in a few decades ago, and which still exists in those parts of the world (such as several South and Central American Republics, &c.) which are still uncommercialised. This cause is: The ableness in uncommercialised communities of those in power, whether oligarchs or autocrats, to make wars for their own private reasons—dynastic, personal, &c. This cause is being slowly and automatically extinguished all over the world by railways, electricity, &c., &c. In some countries, such as England and France, it is extinct.

Therefore, to prevent war for ever between same-speaking countries, two things (one is not sufficient) are necessary:—

- (1) To convince the inhabitants of the fact that war between same-speakers can never pay.
- (2) To secure that the countries be “commercialised.”

For instance, if every man, woman and child in Venezuela or Colombia were convinced of (1) it would not prevent all future war between them. Why? Because, not being “commercialised,” at any moment either is liable to find itself in the hands of, say, a Dictator, who, to extend the area of his sway or to distract attention from awkward matters at home, or for some such personal reason, would not hesitate to make war. In such a case one republic might annex the whole (or part) of the other. The people of both would gain nothing, but the Dictator would.

**The Third and Last Cause.**—(This cause applies only to wars between countries speaking different languages). The third cause is: The irreconcilable clash of interests caused by difference of language.

There is much talk to-day of trusts, monopolies, trade unions. But I assert that there is no monopoly so great as a language. It excludes remorselessly, inflexibly, from its benefits all who cannot speak it. Large incomes are to be earned in Paris, for instance, but only by those who speak French. All others are excluded, and this not by decree of the French Government but by the fiat of the language. The French tongue maintains round the frontiers of France a protectionist wall which excludes most human beings far more strictly and effectively than the tariff barrier erected by the French Government excludes goods. The same applies to all other countries. Political economists write much on the subject of free trade in merchandise, but what is a thousand times more important is free trade in men, and that is impossible under polyglottism.

You may object that in spite of difference of tongue much emigration takes place from one country to another. I reply that the average emigrant earns in his new country, unless he learn its language, the most meagre living; in the same way

a horse, though it speaks no language at all, can earn a living anywhere. Furthermore, emigrants of the same language keep together as much as they can and thus brighten their lot. The case of an emigrant who does not learn the tongue of his new country and who has not been able to keep among those speaking that of his old one is unenviable indeed. There would not be much emigration under those conditions. Thus language is of prime importance herein also.

I have said previously in this pamphlet that countries speaking the same tongue are really common to each other. But countries speaking different languages are *not*. This is the *real* and unsuspected cause of their hostility. The world is divided into a number of water-tight (or rather language-tight) compartments, and the inhabitants of each compartment can only live, move, and have their being in their own particular little compartment. If they get out of their own into some other, they perish. They are not in their natural element; they are like a fish out of water. Thus the English-speaker can only flourish in the English-language compartment; the French-speaker in the French-language compartment, and so on. No rapidity or improvement in the means of communication can affect this in the slightest. A hundred years ago it took weeks in a crawling coach from say Paris to Berlin, whereas now the expresses do the journey in hours; nevertheless the real distance between the two cities has not altered an inch: the distance of a language. San Francisco is nearer to London than Calais is to Dover.

Thus, an extension of say the French language does not benefit English-speakers at all, it benefits no one but French-speakers. And so on.

**Wars that Pay.**—I will now prove that war between folk speaking different tongues can pay handsomely, in fact that such a war can be one of the most profitable, if not *the* most profitable, enterprises in which a nation can engage.

Mr. Angell has noticed that wars have not paid even the winning side. But I assert that the reason for this is that those who carried on the wars did not know the *real* reason they were fighting nor did they know how to turn their victories to advantage. The *real* reason (as I have shewn

earlier in this pamphlet) they were fighting was that they and their adversaries spoke different tongues and the only way to profit by the victories was to use them to extend the language. Wars that result in extensions of flag or rule, like all the wars in history except the indecisive ones, are barren of advantage, and the victors in all the wars that have ever been have always insisted in the terms of peace on extensions of that sort. Hence the conqueror has derived no benefit from his conquest. But I contend that if he had kept his eye firmly fixed on the language alone and subordinated everything else to that, he could and would have ultimately reaped a benefit which would be feebly expressed by cent per cent.

Let me give you an example : Suppose a country imbued with the ideas set forth in this booklet were to vanquish another. To utilise its victory it should act as follows : A section of the territory of the vanquished nation (or the whole of the territory if the victor thinks he is strong enough to deal with the whole) should be *temporarily* taken charge of (*not* annexed) by the victor. This section should be told that it would be considered an independent state in every way, under its own flag, except that schools would be opened, whether the vanquished objected or not, to teach the victor's language, and that the learning of that language would be compulsory for the children. The victors would retain control on this one point. Facilities and material encouragement would be given for adults to learn it, but no compulsion would be exercised in their case. The vanquished would of course object but would have to submit. When I say the vanquished would object I mean the adults among them ; the children would not. The children of any nation would learn Sanskrit or Choctaw or any language you cared to teach them ; they have no prejudices, their minds are virgin. And it is the children who count. They have within them the germs of countless future generations, whereas in the natural course of events the adults will die out in thirty or forty years.

Everything would be done to make matters run smoothly ; if an indemnity were exacted from the section of the vanquished territory not temporarily taken over, it should be spent on advancing the victor's tongue in the section taken over.



I use the words "temporarily taken over." You may ask: How long does "temporarily" mean? The reply is: Until the victor's tongue has displaced that of the vanquished. The sooner that happened the sooner would control be withdrawn. Eventually the section temporarily taken over would form an entirely independent state, as independent as England and the United States are to-day, but speaking the tongue of the victor instead of as formerly that of the vanquished. The victor's rule would not be extended, nor his flag, nor his race, nor his empire, only his language.

This would have several effects. One of the most curious would be that the section whose language had been changed would now stick as firmly to their new tongue as formerly they had to their old. If not "*plus royaliste que le roi*" they would at any rate be "*aussi royaliste que lui*." They would resent any attempt to make them revert to their former tongue as strongly as their forefathers resented the policy of making them change from it. Like Clovis, they would worship what they used to burn and burn what they used to worship.

Another effect would be this: The section whose tongue had been changed would now have no sympathies with the section which had retained its original tongue. All its sympathies would be with the nation which had compelled the change, because it now spoke that nation's language.

Thus the victors by insisting on the change of tongue would have gained an ally.

This brings me to another thesis of mine, which is as follows: The only true, permanent, and natural ally any country can have is another country speaking the same language. Identity of language sets up a permanent community of interest.

Another effect: The victor's territory and that of the section whose language had been changed would now be common to each other. Therefore, if the victor's tongue happened to be a very far-spread one, and that of the vanquished a restricted one, the section that had changed would have greatly benefited.

I have said previously that for a country to annex part of another speaking the same tongue is like trying to increase the size of a blanket by cutting a piece off the top and sewing it

on to the bottom. But for a country to annex part of another speaking a different language, and to alter its language, is like cutting a piece off a *different* blanket and sewing it on to the first. In this case there is a clear gain in size.

It must also be remembered that if you extinguish part or the whole of some other language in favour of your own, you gain in two ways: your own has increased, and that of your opponent has decreased correspondingly. It is like a vote transferred during a division in Parliament; it counts two: one party is minus a vote and the other is plus the same one.

An objection which may be made is this: Even if it be admitted that my idea is correct, that a nation can only benefit by a victorious war if it uses its victory to displace a language, nevertheless, it is impracticable. The answer is: It is not impracticable. All effort should be focussed on that one thing, everything else being of no importance in comparison. The whole war should be fought for that purpose alone, and the terms of peace should consist of that one point and that only. The flag, independence, rule, race, customs, education, traditions, laws, religion, empire, frontiers, &c., of the conquered people should remain absolutely unmolested in every way, the language alone should be changed.

The immense majority of every nation is fully occupied with trying to earn a living, and is apathetic on nearly every point except wages and hours of labour. Quite apart from compulsion, which you could use if needed, if they were convinced that learning the new tongue would be profitable, they would not object to the children learning it. Besides, we see it happening every day. Every emigrant from the European Continent to the United States knows very well that one result of his emigrating will be that his children and grandchildren, &c., will learn English, and that his grandchildren and future generations will know nothing of their forefathers original tongue. Yet in spite of that he emigrates. Why? To better the lot of himself and of his children. What I propose, therefore, is to obtain one of the results of emigrating without actually doing so. The reason the United States are worth emigrating to is that they are a one-tongue land, and that Europe is not. If most of the states of the United States had different tongues (like Europe) the

prosperity of that country would not be a fraction of what it is. Besides, it would be crushed by armaments like Europe.

I consider it would take, in most cases, about sixty years to obliterate a language if all efforts were bent to that purpose. Sixty years, or even twice sixty years, is a very short period in the history of a nation. The history of England goes back more than a thousand years, and there is no reason to suppose that the world will not last for several thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of years longer. Besides, although you would have to wait sixty years for the *full* benefit of the change to accrue, *part* of the benefit would begin to show itself within a few years, and it would go on increasing year by year. Likewise, as soon as you had altered the tongue of one tract of land, that tract would help you to carry on the good work, which would proceed apace, gathering bulk automatically like a snowball.

It will be urged that the policy here outlined is cruel and oppressive. I reply that it is nothing like so cruel and oppressive as perpetual armaments and periodical wars. Besides, it takes only a limited time to accomplish, while its benefits are eternal. *Aux grands maux il faut de grands remèdes* and the remedy I prescribe will effect a complete cure, *and it is the only one that will*. You cannot eat your cake and have it too. If you want peace (and disarmament) you can't have polyglottism; if you insist on polyglottism you can have no peace or disarmament.

Dean Swift once wrote (I quote from memory), that "he who makes two blades of grass grow where one grew before has well earned the gratitude of mankind."

Reversing and altering that phrase I would say that "he who makes one language grow where two or more grew before has done much to deserve man's gratitude."

The world should hail with delight the death of any language, because the fewer languages there are the better the world will be.

**Proof and Example.**—Let me apply the three causes to some wars which have actually happened, and prove their correctness. Any war will do. I will take for instance the South African War of 1899-1902. According to all the foregoing,

that should be due to Cause 3, *i.e.*, to difference of language. And so it was. Here is the proof, which can be more easily set forth by a series of questions.

Were not the Transvaal Boers fighting to maintain a Dutch-speaking Republic? If none of them had been able to speak a word of Dutch would they have fought to maintain a Dutch-speaking Republic? Would Paul Kruger ever have been elected President by them if he had been unable to speak Dutch? Would their leaders have had any influence at all over them (*i.e.*, would they have been leaders) if they had spoken no Dutch? To go further back, would there ever have been such a thing as a Dutch-speaking Republic in South Africa if the Dutch language had not existed in that country? Suppose a section of the Boers, though of pure Boer race, had spoken only English, would that section have desired the maintenance of a Dutch-speaking Republic, that is, a Republic of whose language they could not understand a word?

Let me suppose that it were possible for me, for instance, to change the language of the Boers in a second, at will. (I am well aware that the thing is not possible but the supposition is perfectly admissible in logic). If I changed it suddenly from Dutch to, say, Portuguese, would not the same men who a minute before were fighting to maintain a Dutch-speaking state, wouldn't they now fight as stoutly to maintain a Portuguese-speaking state and also wouldn't they object very strongly to the very idea of a Dutch-speaking Republic? And the same thing if their tongue were changed to Italian, Spanish or any other language?

During the war, Johannesburg (which spoke English) took the side of England, and the country districts (which spoke Dutch) took the side of the Transvaal. But suppose the languages had been exactly reversed, *i.e.*, that Johannesburg had spoken Dutch and the country districts English, in that case wouldn't their attitudes have been reversed too, wouldn't Johannesburg have been pro-Dutch instead of anti, and the country districts pro-English instead of anti? All this applies, "*mutatis mutandis*," to other wars.

When I was a little boy I was one day surprised to find the red and green lights on the railway were in reality only white lights with a red or green glass in front of them,



that the same light could be white, red, or green, etc., simply according to the colour of the glass through which it shone. I had always supposed the lights themselves to be each of a different nature, some white, some green, some red. It had never occurred to me that the whole difference lay in the colour of the glass, and that alone.

The glass is the language, and the light is the man. The same man will become French, German, English, Italian, anything, according to his language. All men are really only the passive instruments of their language. Thus a body of men will found, maintain, and die for, an Italian-speaking state, simply because they happen to speak Italian, if they had been brought up to speak German, they would have done the same for a German-speaking state. By manipulating the language, and that alone, among men of the white race, you can manufacture Germans, English, French, &c., just as you can manufacture boots, or hats, or socks. It is all artificial.

**Racialism is a Myth.**—Among folk of the same colour, “racialism,” “race-hatred,” &c., are pure delusions. What really exists is “language-hatred.” A man may be of the purest English race, yet if he speaks no English he will have no sympathy whatever with an English-speaking state. A body of such men will certainly never establish an English-speaking state, because

- (a) They can’t, seeing that they speak no English, and
- (b) They don’t want to, for the same reason.

**The Blood - is - thicker - than - Water Error.**—This phrase is very often used, and I take it to mean that if people are of the same blood it creates a bond between them. Let me test this assertion. Take six children all of exactly the same blood or race. Bring them up so that they each speak entirely different languages. Take other six children, each of totally distinct blood or race. Bring them all up to speak the same language. Put the whole twelve in a room together. How will they sort themselves out, according to blood or language? Will blood seek blood, or will language attract language? (I am speaking of races of the same colour).

**Race stands for Capability, Language for Direction.**—The *direction* in which a man exerts his abilities is determined by his language, and nothing else—it is beyond his own control. Thus Shakespeare's abilities have enriched English literature, but not French or German. Why? Because Shakespeare only knew English. For all his genius he could not have written a French play. Had he known only French, however, he would have enriched French literature. The same thing, "*mutatis mutandis*," applies to Molière, Schiller, etc. But the *capabilities* of these men were determined by their race, not their language. An English-speaking Hottentot could not write plays of transcendent merit.

**Patriotism.**—This word means "love of country, of the fatherland." But I suggest that the feeling that goes by that name is really love of language. Suppose an Englishman has been away from England for, say, forty years and then returns. Suppose that during his absence the language of England has been changed from English to German. I suggest that he will not feel at all at home in England, although the country itself has not changed. He will soon leave. Why? Because, although an Englishman in England, he will feel himself a stranger in a strange land on account of the difference of tongue.

**The present Idea about Colonies Wrong.**—The hitherto universal conception of a colony is a settlement or plantation of men from one country to another. But I contend that the colonising principle is not man but the language. To have colonies you need not export men—export the language. Thus Australia is an English colony, not because the folk are of English race or under the English flag, but because it speaks English. If it spoke no English its English flag and English race would not make it an English colony. Likewise, if everyone in Australia were of French race, and if the whole country were under the French flag, it would still be an English colony if it spoke only English.

**Empires.**—The universal conception of an Empire is a territory or collection of territories, not necessarily monoglot,

acknowledging one flag or rule. I beg leave to think that that is totally wrong. Such empires are semi-worthless to their inhabitants. The correct definition should be, a territory or a number of territories speaking the same language and not necessarily under one flag or rule. Such an empire is very valuable to its inhabitants.

**Switzerland.**—This country, though speaking three tongues, does not invalidate my thesis. Switzerland is quiet because internecine quarrels would invite partition and interference by the Great Powers. And in reality there is no such thing as Switzerland. One part is really a section of France, another a section of Germany, and the third, a section of Italy. These three parts enjoy far greater privileges at present (such as very light military service) than they would if added to the three Powers to which they really belong. Hence they keep peaceful. Their quarrelling is done for them by their three big relations. The only true Switzerland is the Romance-speaking district, which only numbers about 80,000 souls. A proof of the above is that some of the leading men in *France* have come from the *French*-speaking section of Switzerland. How is that? Because of the community of language. Jean Jacques Rousseau was a Swiss, so was Marat who was killed during the French Revolution in 1793, so was Necker, Louis XVI.'s Finance Minister, and so was Mme. Necker and their daughter Mme. de Staël, if parentage is to count.

I have given in this pamphlet only the barest outline of my theory as it would take at least twenty times as much space to develop the matter with any detail. But I trust I have said enough to give a clear idea of the main principles. From these principles many deductions, inferences and applications can be drawn, upon which I have not had space even to touch in the narrow compass of this short pamphlet.

P. S. KING & SON  
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